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ABSTRACT

An overview of contemporary ideas regarding in-service vocational-technical education is presented in brief outline. In-service education is defined (as a "planned, goal-directed change process") and guidelines for planning, organizing, and conducting in-service education, consistent with the definition, are given. Key points are reiterated and are illustrated in a model. Available information germane to the current status of vocational-technical in-service education is presented without comment; instead, the reader is asked to "ponder and probe the data for its true meaning." In conclusion, the author raises several contemporary questions regarding in-service education, asking about priorities, areas for change, identification of needs, financing, delivery, responsibility, evaluation, and the relationship between in-service education and a performance-based certificate program. (AJ)

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CONTEMPORARY IDEAS FOR INCLUSION IN IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The purpose of this presentation is to briefly provide an overview of contemporary ideas regarding in-service vocational-technical education. No doubt, the presentation will raise more questions than it answers. The format and content relate to the following enabling objectives:

1. Define in-service education.
2. Identify the current status of vocational-technical in-service education.
3. Raise several contemporary questions regarding in-service education.

DEFINITION IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

An investigation of the in-service topic requires an inclusion of a definition. Book resources provide several different definitions. Harris, Bessent and McIntyre in their book, In-Service Education, A Guide to Better Practice, provide a generally acceptable statement. They define in-service education ". . . as a planned goal-directed change process introduced through a deliberate intervention aimed at some altered future condition . . ."

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This definition mandates certain practices related to planning, organizing, and conducting in-service education. Dorothea Sommer enumerated several guidelines consistent with the above definition in her book, In-Service Education for Teacher Supervision and Administrators. The guidelines follow:

> The important problem for in-service education is one of significance for the people involved. The term "significance" means that the individual can become involved . . .
>
> That the people who identify the problem should determine the goals and plan the means for achieving the goal.
>
> There should be many opportunities for members of the group to relate themselves to each other.
>
> One or more persons should provide expert help in individual and group problem-solving processes.
>
> Create an atmosphere where members of the group feel maximum security within the group . . .
>
> Use a multiplicity of resources.
>
> Develop the simplest possible means to move from decision to action.
>
> Build an experimental climate so that participants will feel free to try out new ideas.
>
> Evaluation should be an essential aspect of an in-service program.
>
> Individual differences fo the groups' members should be accepted and used.
>
> The participants should not merely accept the status quo, but they should try to imagine better educational, social, economic, and political conditions.

Scrutiny of the definition and guidelines provided by experts reveals several key points. At the risk of being redundant, the key points follow:

1. In-service education is an instrument for change. Thus, the in-service education should be consistent with the body of knowledge related to change.

2. In-service education must evolve from felt needs. Thus, identification of needs becomes an essential starting point for any in-service education program.

3. In-service education must be planned. Thus, lip-service and incidental happenings are not appropriately labeled as in-service education.

4. In-service education can be provided on either an internal or external basis. Thus, educational personnel can be in-serviced in their own school or in-serviced outside the school.

5. In-service education must be goal oriented. Thus, it becomes very easy to apply performance oriented practices to the in-service program.

The definition, guidelines, and key points may be expressed more clearly in an in-service education model. Figure I illustrates a possible model.

CURRENT STATUS IN-SERVICE

The current status of vocational-technical in-service education is difficult to assess. Information regarding in-service is obscure and fragmented. However, certain information germane to the topic is available. The information follows:

1. In the U.S., 235,658 vocational teachers and 3,254 teacher's aids were employed for fiscal year 1972. This figure is up approximately 25,000 teachers from fiscal 1971. No specific information is available on the quantity or quality of the in-service education.

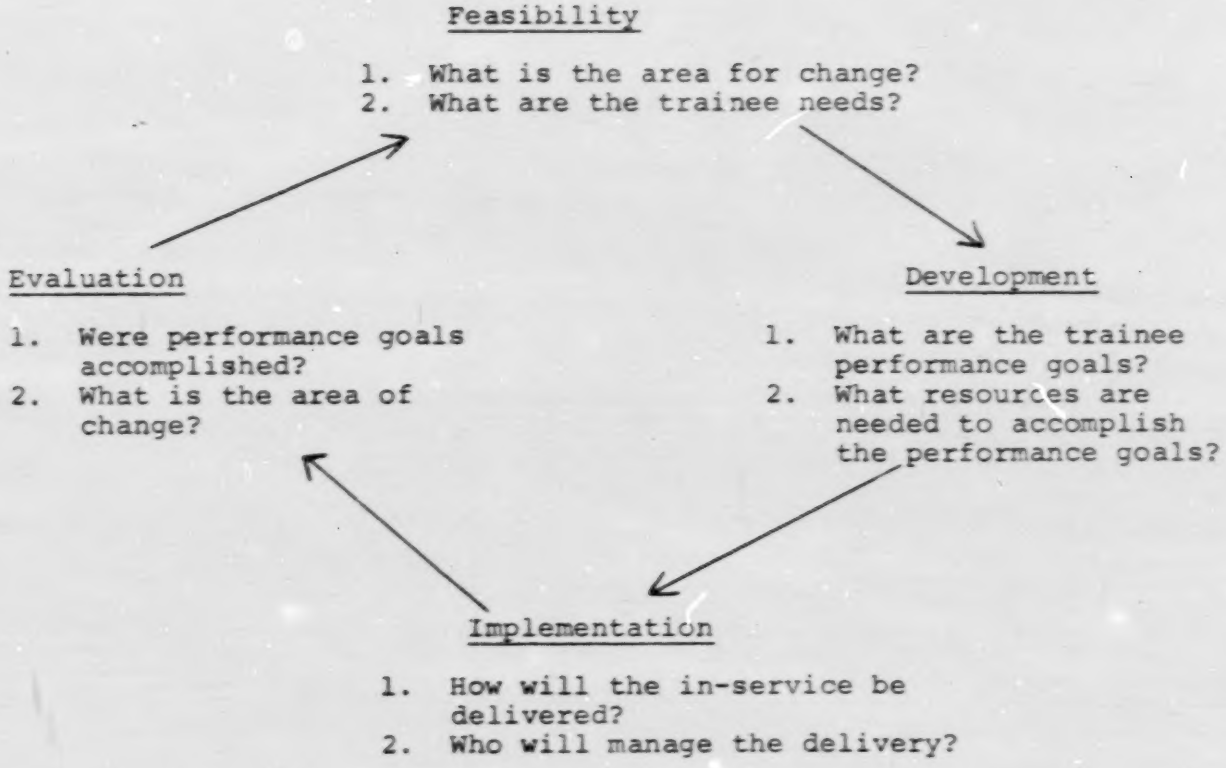
Feasibility
1. What is the area for change?
2. What are the trainee needs?
Development
1. What are the trainee performance goals?
2. What resources are needed to accomplish the performance goals?
Implementation
1. How will the in-service be delivered?
2. Who will manage the delivery?
Evaluation
1. Were performance goals accomplished?
2. What is the area of change?

FIGURE I
IN-SERVICE MODEL

2. Local schools have typically provided two in-service days per year for teachers. One dares not venture to assess feelings of worth regarding these experiences.

3. Vocational-technical teachers require dual competence. One portion is their occupational specialty and one portion is professional education. The problem of currency in the specialty area has long been unresolved.

4. The advent of Career Education creates a new area for knowledge, skill, and attitude development.

5. Considerable attention is being given to performance-based certification programs. This move may focus attention toward another set of needs.

6. The usual pattern of external in-service, outside the local school setting, has been primarily through advanced degree programs. Certain state departments of education and the NEA are recommending that dollars for in-service be directed to the local school--not the college or university.

7. A computer assisted review of ERIC data via RIE, CIJE, AIM, and ARM using ten descriptors reveals the following:

   a. Institutes have comprised approximately 50% of external non-degree in-service efforts.

   b. Workshops, seminars, conferences, and internships have comprised another 40%.

   c. Administrators have been provided with about 25% of the external in-service programs.

   d. Twenty five percent of external in-service education has been oriented toward community colleges.

   e. Less than ten percent of the external in-service programs for vocational-technical education have been occupational specialty oriented.

8. No data were available to support that planned, goal directed, day-to-day in-service was being provided to vocational-technical educators. Subjective "hear-say" data are available to support the notion that many administrators have job descriptions alluding to in-service responsibilities.

Inasmuch as instant analysis is frowned upon today, please permit a no comment regarding the information presented in the "current status" portion of the presentation. Rather, please ponder and probe the data for its true meaning. Perhaps the contemporary questions which are posed below will be helpful.

CONTEMPORARY QUESTIONS

1. What priority should in-service education be given in vocational-technical education?

2. What areas for change should be addressed via in-service education?

3. How can vocational-technical educators' needs be identified?

4. How should in-service education be financed?

5. How should in-service education be delivered? Via modularized instruction? Via telephone? Via television? Via in-service experts? Via courses? Via independent study programs? Via institutes, workshops, conferences, internships? Via graduate programs?

6. Who should assume the responsibility and authority for in-service education? The local school? The intermediate or county district? The state department? The college or university?

7. How should in-service education be evaluated?

8. What relationship will there be between in-service education and a performance-based certificate program?

In closing, please assess this presentation. A successful rating requires YES answers be provided to the following questions:

	YES	NO
1. Did the presentation offer you an acceptable definition of in-service education?		
2. Did the presentation identify the current status of vocational-technical in-service education?		
3. Did the presentation, in your mind, raise at least five legitimate contemporary in-service questions?		